

# Noyes artists open their doors

By Karie Angell  
Luc

The resident artists of the Noyes Cultural Arts Center welcomed the community Feb. 28 to a free, three-hour afternoon Open Studios event, a regular offering at 927 Noyes St.

Guests visited artisan studios and experienced student art. A City of [Evanston](#)-sponsored exhibit on the second floor celebrating Black History Month featured the art of Jevoid Simmons, of Evanston.



Jennifer Presant is an Evanston-based artist whose medium is oil on linen. "Double Vision" is the name of this work. (Karie Angell Luc, Pioneer Press)

The etc. Music School offered a free performance at 5 p.m. The school is directed by founder Mike O'Mara. of Evanston, who accepted on behalf of etc. Music School, Evanston Mayor [Elizabeth Tisdahl](#)'s Award for the Arts at the "A Bright Night for the Arts" event last Oct. 9.

Natalie Vanderlaan, a 2012 Evanston Township High School graduate, is etc. Music School assistant director of original musicals and choral programs.

The ensemble features singers in eighth grade through high school. Performance selections Feb. 28 included original arrangements of folk, pop and rock music in room 213.

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Vanderlaan talked about the Open Studios opportunity shortly before the etc. singers began their show to a large audience turnout.

"I think it's fantastic," she said. "It kind of brings in people. The art of making art is putting it together. Art is probably the most profoundly human thing we can do."

The Actor's Gymnasium and the Piven Theatre Workshop are also located in the Noyes building.

"I live in Kenilworth but hang out at Piven!" said Ronny Stein, who has trained under Joyce Piven, co-founder and artistic director emeritus of the 40-year-old workshop.

Stein "was just passing by" and happened upon the Open Studios event.



Right, Liz Tuckwell, an Evanston Township High School graduate, explains her art to Wencke Joanne Braathen of Chicago, an author, Feb. 28, 2015 during an Open Studios event at Evanston Noyes Cultural Art Center. (Karie Angell Luc, Pioneer Press)

"This is awesome, I love Evanston," said Stein, who took advantage of an open microphone upstairs near artwork by Jevold Simmons and sang.

Stein had a capacity audience and was encouraged to croon by voice teacher Fay Kaiser, who maintains a voice studio at Noyes Cultural Arts Center and is a regular performer at Evanston civic and cultural venues.

Meanwhile, down the hall, Sara Piepmeier, an Evanston resident of 30 years, welcomed patrons at her studio.

"I do painting and sculpture," said Piepmeier, who worked on a painting and sculpture of Dieneba Soma, of Evanston, who founded Future for Faso Children, which provides health and education to children in Burkina Faso of West Africa.

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"It's an honor to have my portrait done by such a talented artist," Soma said.

Piepmeier, who has been a Noyes Cultural Arts Center resident artist since 1995, has supported projects such as the Skokie Northshore Sculpture Park and the (WFP) United Nations World Food Programme, among other causes.

Piepmeier said she appreciates Open Studios for fellowship.

"It's a wonderful idea," she said. "It's so much fun and I've had a great time talking to people."

Liz Tuckwell, of Chicago, is another resident artist from Evanston.

Tuckwell, who works in oil on canvas, spent several minutes discussing her work with Wencke Johanne Braathen of Chicago, the author of "Rituals in Sacred Stone," a historic novel about Mary Magdalene (Balboa Press, 2013).

Many of Tuckwell's paintings feature splashes of teal.

"The movement reflects emotion," said Tuckwell, who relies on bold brush strokes and a palette knife. "I like the spectrum of the greens and blues. But a deep, dark red I won't turn down."

Braathen, who also likes blue, says the color, to her, represents meditation and has a dream-like state.

"You have to go through blue to get to your deepest sense of self, your core," said Braathen, also the author of "Sex on the Altar (Grave Distractions Publications, 2014)."

Tuckwell said she was pleased to have her work be an Open Studios conversation starter.

"Painting is such a private process," the artist said. "When the doors are open, you're able to relate visually."

Jennifer Present of Evanston works in oil on linen.

"I love talking about my work," Present said. "Painting is a solitary activity."

Her work "Double Vision," has a silhouette over a backdrop and was featured on an easel. People stopped to study the composition.

"It's really exciting to open up my studio and talk with other people," Present said.

*Karie Angell Luc is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.*

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